

1 Peter Chapter 1F

This morning in our study of 1 Peter we are going to consider the family of God and the bond of brotherly love that identifies us as children of our Heavenly father.

- Looking back over my lifetime it is easy to see the dramatic changes that have taken place within the nuclear family over the past 60 years.
- In light of these changes, I see a wide open door for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Like the ongoing erosion of the soil, the moral decline of our culture has eaten away at the roots of society. No place is this more evident than in the Home.

Media influences over time seek to keep us entertained, even laughing as they quietly destroy the very foundation on which civilization itself is built.

- So today the family that God himself instituted with one man and one woman living together in covenant relationship before Him, raising their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord is an anomaly. And those who promote a Biblical view of marriage and family are viewed as old school, narrow-minded people who are holding society back from becoming all it can be.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau: Between 1960 and 2016:

- The number of children living in households with two parents has declined from 88% to 69%. When you bring marriage into the picture, the statistics become even more offensive.
- The number of children living in households with two parents who are actually MARRIED to one another has declined to only 47 %.
- The number of children living in single parent households with only their mother has nearly tripled from 8% in 1960 to 23% in 2016.

How can we in the church address the moral decline in our culture?

- If we as Husbands will love our wives, as Christ loved the church and wives will live in loving submission to their husbands; if the Body of Christ will love one another with a sincere, fervent love we will shine as lights in the darkness.
- When we communicate the Gospel in the Power of the Spirit, God himself will bring about a radical transformation in the hearts of lost and broken people.
- Think about it, we can joyfully tell a whole generation of young people, who don't know their biological Father, that God is a father to the fatherless.

Psalm 68: 5 (NKJV) **Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. 6 God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.**

- There was a point in my own life where this truth became a real treasure to me. A time when My own Father left the family house never to return.

- In my late teen years, I came to understand in a very real way that: **God settles the solitary in a home.** As I grew to understand the Fatherhood of God and the grace with which He adopted me into his family, I came to realize that I was loved with an everlasting love.
- At that time, God gave me a voracious appetite for his Word and everywhere I turned, I discovered more and more about the family of God.

John 1:12 **But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**

Galatians 3: 26 **for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.**

Romans 8: 14 **For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

15 **For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"**

16 **The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,**

1 John 3:1 **See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.**

IN our studies in first Peter, we have already encountered language portraying God as our Father and Believers as those who are born of God, children of God who possess an imperishable and unfading eternal inheritance.

It is in the context of our common spiritual birth, in the bonds of familial relationships, that God, through the pen of Peter calls us to love one another deeply, from the heart.

In verses 22 – 25 we find that we are:

1. Commanded to Love
2. Cleansed to Love
3. Conceived to Love

The Theme of the paragraph we are studying this morning is found in Peter's simple exhortation to love one another in Vs 22 (***Love one another earnestly from a pure heart***)

This exhortation to love is sandwiched between two perfect participles.

(I realize, it's been a long time since we were in 10th grade English class, so let me explain)

- A participle is a word or a phrase that modifies or helps to define a verb or phrase. (Verbal Adjective)

- Very simply when Peter Commands us to “**LOVE ONE ANOTHER**” these two Participles help us to understand HOW and WHY we should love one another.
- Let’s look at the command and then we will try to understand the How and Why?

1. Commanded to Love

As a believer in Christ you should know that God commands you to love your brothers and sisters. 1 Peter 1: **love one another earnestly from a pure heart,**

- Of course this command is not original to Peter, He is only repeating the command that was given to Him by the Lord Jesus.

John 13:34 “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.**”

John 15:12 “**This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**”

The Apostle Paul writing to the believers at Thessalonica actually praises them for showing love to the brothers who are scattered throughout Macedonia.

1Th 4:9 **Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,**

- The Spirit of God dwelling in the heart of the Believer compels them to love one another with great strength and sincerity. Let’s see how Peter describes it:

Within Peter’s command to love, there are two adverbs that help us understand the kind of love or the quality of love that believers should possess for one another.

1. First we are to love one another “**Earnestly**” (KJV – **Fervently**)

- This word “**earnestly**” is a Physiological or Biological term. It literally means to “stretch out to the furthest limits of a muscle’s capacity.
- You might find a good example of this on ESPN in the morning highlights. A video clip of a center fielder chasing down a fly ball who literally throws himself into mid-air, stretching his whole body out in order to catch the ball.
 - Every muscle fiber is strained to the limit to catch the ball.
 - If men can do this to win a game that will mean nothing in a day or two, should we not stretch ourselves out in love for one another and in doing so, display the love of God to a hurting society?

Obedying this command to Earnestly Love your brother or sister in Christ will stretch or strain you beyond your comfortable limits. But let me remind you, This is not a suggestion, it is a command.

- As you probably know the Body of Christ is made up of people who are different from you, some of them are just plain strange. Their personalities are diverse, you might call them unique, (But) God commands you to love them.

- You may be quiet and reserved and they are boisterous and overbearing. Because they confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, because they show the fruit of repentance and faith, YOU are called of God to love them as part of God's Forever Family.
- You may have been walking with the Lord for decades and they are brand new. Their faith is weak. Let me ask: do you look down on them? Or do you stretch yourself out in order to encourage them? Listen to Paul:

Romans 15:1 **We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.** 2 **Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.** 3 **For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."**

- This great redemption that comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ does not transform people into YOUR image it transforms both YOU and THEM into Christ's image.

In Chapter 4 Peter will write: 1 Peter 4: 8 **Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.**

- "Keep On" tells us that there is no time limit, no expiration date on our brotherly love. It doesn't stop with one valiant effort, it is a lifestyle.
- I know from personal experience that the wounds that you receive in the body of Christ will tempt you to STOP loving, to grow cold in your affection for one another. But, Jesus taught us, **"If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone compels you to go a mile with him go two. That, my friends is stretching yourself out!**
- Can't do that? Pray with sincerity and ask the Lord to help. WON'T do that? You need to repent of your hardness of heart.
- Moving on, Peter tells us that this earnest love for our brothers comes from a pure heart:

1 Peter 1:22 **love one another earnestly from a pure heart,**

- A pure heart has no mixed motives, no hidden agenda and it seeks no glory for itself.
- Love that issues from a pure heart is not coerced by some external, legalistic expectations;
- On the contrary, it freely arises from a joyful, redeemed heart as the indwelling Holy Spirit compels you to express benevolence. David writes:

Psalms 40:8, **"I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."**

- When God gives us a new heart of flesh, He changes our priorities. HIS will takes precedence over our will. The fleshly pleasures that once motivated our actions are replaced by a newfound delight in the will of God.
- The endless pit of self-absorption is crucified with Christ and a new man is resurrected, empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a new life of love.

- Moving on to the first participle we discover the basis for God's command

2 (we have been) Cleansed (in order that we may freely) Love

1 Peter 1: 22 **Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,**

- The purification of our souls, the consecration of our lives, according to Peter, comes through "obedience to the truth."
- Of course, Peter is referring here to our conversion.
- By the grace of God through faith in Christ we are washed, we are cleansed, we are sanctified through the work of Christ and placed in a right relationship with God.

1 Corinthians 6 speaks of this "Cleansing." Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 6:9b **Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

- Throughout the New Testament, this cleansing is tied to our obedience to the truth.

John 3: 36 **Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.**

- We can see from John's writing here that Belief and Obedience to the truth are interchangeable terms that are used to describe our response to the effective call of God that comes through the Gospel.
- And the fruit of that cleansing, the outcome of our conversion is the God given ability to demonstrate "**Sincere (Genuine, Unhypocritical) brotherly love.**"

The Apostle John leaves no doubt that LOVE is the defining attribute of every true Believer. If there is no love, then there is no real light and no spiritual life.

1 John 2: 9 **Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.**

10 **Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.**

- These words written by the Apostle John, inspired by the Holy Spirit act like a sword that pierces our hearts and evaluates our motives.
- Like a searchlight scanning the terrain of your soul looking for the evidence of brotherly love in order to confirm your faith and verify your membership in the family of God.
- By the Grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ we have been Cleansed of all sin and empowered by the Spirit to live a life of love.
- Moving on to our last point we find that we have been conceived to love, Born Again by the imperishable seed of God's Word, bearing the family resemblance.

One of the fads that has captivated our society is the search for our ancestral roots. More than 3 million people have submitted DNA samples to Ancestry.com in an effort to discover their family and ethnic heritage.

- There seems to be a growing curiosity within people to discover the seed of their family tree.

In God's creative order, everything that comes to life has its origin in a seed. Any good biologist can tell you that the basic source that initiates all plant and animal life is found in a seed.

- Whether it is a dandelion or a hypo, a stalk of corn or a newborn baby, reproduction in this material world comes through the deployment of a seed.
- Although my children don't really look like me, the seed that I provided at their conception included 23 chromosomes that helped to make them who they are.

In verse 23 Peter tells us that our New Birth, in Christ did not come through a perishable or biological seed but through an imperishable seed.

1 Peter 1: 23 **since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;**

- Everything that grows from a natural or perishable seed will eventually die. BUT sinners who are born again by the seed of God's Word receive eternal life. We saw this in our study of the book of James:

James 1: 18 **Of his own will he (God) brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.**

- To strengthen His point Peter reaches back to the Prophet Isaiah. In Ch. 40 Isaiah draws a comparison between the perishable biological seed and the eternal seed of God's Word.

1 Peter 1: 24 **for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.**

Because we are Born of God, made alive through the Spirit by the imperishable seed of God's Word we possess a God given capacity to LOVE one another.

Like ALL families, the family of God possesses certain traits, certain characteristic that identify us as belonging to a common Father, Born of the Seed of God's Word.

- In my house blue eyes are a dominant trait. In the family of God, eyes of Love are the dominant family trait.

2 Peter 1: 3 **His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,**

4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

- We have become partakers of the divine nature and the dominant characteristic of His nature is Love.

Are you in the Family?

- Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, God's promised Savior. If you do, John says you are born of God.
- And everyone who loves the Father loves those who are born of the Father.

1John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

As Believers We are ALL called of God to love one another, fervently, from a pure heart because that kind of love is consistent with the new life that we have received in Christ.

As our time together comes to a close I have to ask, Is there something standing in the way, something hindering you from really stretching yourself out in love for your brothers.

- You may have started out strong but over the years you picked up baggage.
- Other believers wounded you stabbed you in the back, friends abandoned you, walked away from the church and even from the faith?
 - You have been hurt multiple times?
 - So you say, I tried it and it didn't work, Gave it a shot and it backfired!
 - So you have decided that you aren't going to try anymore?
- You stretch yourself out, really laid it all on the line for a brother in need and they didn't even have the curtesy to say "thank you?"
- Did you stop loving because no one loved you in return?

Friends we need to keep our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus, He came to his own and his own did not receive him.

- He committed no sin and there was no deceit in his mouth and still they nailed him to a tree.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

